SHADOW WAR: THE EPIC CLIMAX!
SUPERMAN® & HAWKMAN™
ACTION COMICS
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE HISTORY OF THE DC UNIVERSE is must reading
by JOHN BYRNE & DICK GIORDANO

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I'M GETTING CLOSER. THAT ANNOYING HYPERSONIC SIGNAL THAT'S BEEN HITTING ME FOR THE PAST TWENTY MINUTES..
...ITS SOURCE IS NEAR HERE.
VERY NEAR HERE.
SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT MESS.
LOOKS AS IF THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT ARE HANDLING THE WORST OF IT.
LET'S SEE IF MY X-RAY VISION CAN FIND SOMEONE DOWN THERE WHO MIGHT BE BEHIND THAT SIGNAL.
AH-HA!

I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED IT WOULD BE THEM.
MIDWAY CITY HAS PRETTY MUCH ALWAYS BEEN THEIR TURF...
...OR SHOULD I SAY ROOST?
ALTHOUGH I WOULDN'T NORMALLY EXPECT TO FIND MYSELF FLYING INTO A WAR ZONE.
ESPECIALLY NOT WITH THOSE TWO ON THE JOB.
THIS WHOLE PLACE SEEMS TO BE SELF-DESTRUCTING.
HMMM...
IT'S LOOKING MORE AND MORE AS IF THIS BUSINESS GOES A LOT DEEPER THAN FIRST INSPECTION MIGHT SUGGEST.
A QUICK SCAN OF THESE ODDLY GARBED CASUALTIES REVEALS MANY OF THEM AREN'T EVEN HUMAN.
NO GREAT SHOCKER, I SUPPOSE. I'M CERTAINLY NOT THE ONLY EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL ON THE BLOCK.
IN FACT, MY HOSTS ARE ALIENS THEMSELVES...
...AND PROBABLY BEST-EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE ME WITH SOME ANSWERS!

SUPERMAN, HAWKMAN and HAWKWOMAN Starring In...

ALL WARS MUST END

PART TWO

CONTINUING THE EPIC ADVENTURE BEGUN IN HAWKMAN #10

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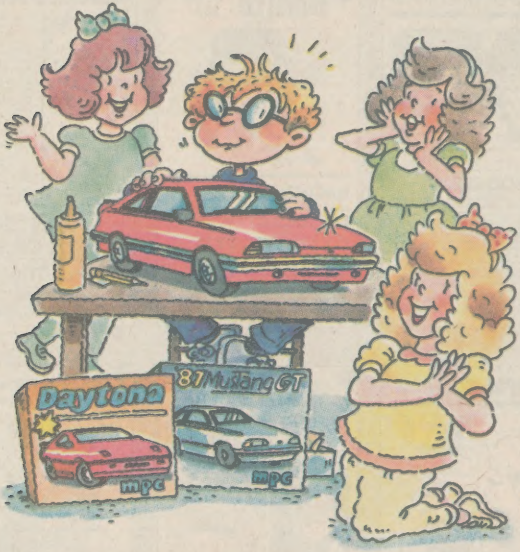
THERE'S NOT REALLY ENOUGH TIME TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING, SUPERMAN.
SUFFICE IT TO SAY...
THIS MAN HERE IS A NATIVE OF MY HOME PLANET, THANAGAR.
HE'S A WOULD-BE WORLD CONQUEROR NAMED VED.
HE'S BEEN THE MAIN FORCE BEHIND MOST OF THE TROUBLES THAT HAVE PLAGUED HAWKWOMAN AND MYSELF FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS.
HE'S THE LEADER OF AN INVASION FRONT, SUPERMAN.
HAWKMAN AND I HAVE BETRAYED OUR OWN WORLD, OUR OWN RACE, TO PROTECT EARTH FROM HIS PLOTS AND SCHEMES.
THAT'S VERY NOBLE, I'M SURE...
BUT IF YOU NOW HAVE THIS VED CHARACTER SAFELY IN CUSTODY...
WHY DID YOU SEND FOR ME?
THE CAPTURE OF VED IS ONLY A BEGINNING, SUPERMAN.
WE NEED YOUR POWER TO HELP US DESTROY THE THANAGARIAN INVASION FLEET!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

BUILD A REPUTATION.



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BRONZE TIGER

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INTERPOL *BULLETIN*

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DEADSHOT

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ENCHANTRESS

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CAPTAIN BOOMERANG

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SUICIDE SQUAD

THEY GET A CHANCE TO DIE FOR THEIR COUNTRY

A NEW DC MONTHLY SERIES. ON SALE IN FEBRUARY

JOHN OSTRANDER
LUKE McDONNELL
KARL KESEL

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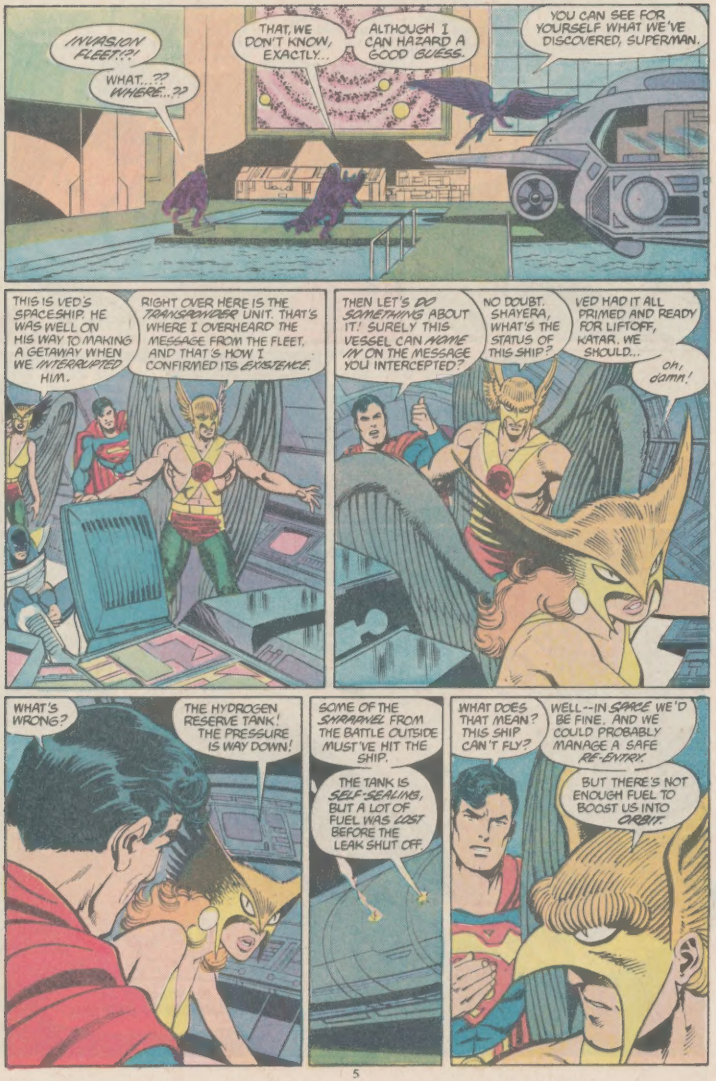
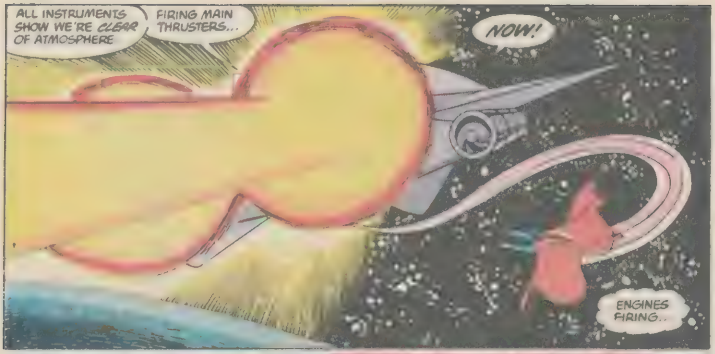
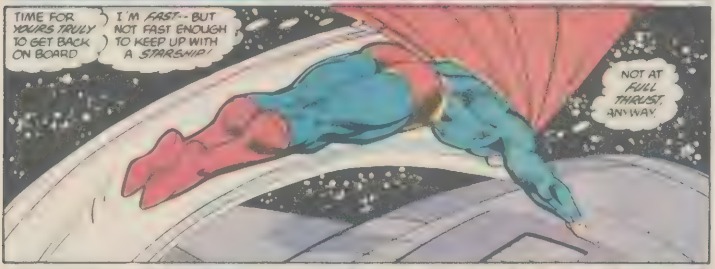

INVASION FLEET!?!
WHAT...?? WHERE...??
THAT, WE DON'T KNOW, EXACTLY...
ALTHOUGH I CAN HAZARD A GOOD GUESS.
YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF WHAT WE'VE DISCOVERED, SUPERMAN.
THIS IS VED'S SPACESHIP. HE WAS WELL ON HIS WAY TO MAKING A GETAWAY WHEN WE INTERRUPTED HIM.
RIGHT OVER HERE IS THE TRANSMITTER UNIT. THAT'S WHERE I OVERHEARD THE MESSAGE FROM THE FLEET, AND THAT'S HOW I CONFIRMED ITS EXISTENCE.
THEN LET'S DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! SURELY THIS VESSEL CAN HOME IN ON THE MESSAGE YOU INTERCEPTED?
NO DOUBT, SHAYERA, WHAT'S THE STATUS OF THIS SHIP?
VED HAD IT ALL PRIMED AND READY FOR LIFTOFF, KATAR. WE SHOULD...
OH, DAMN!
WHAT'S WRONG?
THE HYDROGEN RESERVE TANK! THE PRESSURE IS WAY DOWN!
SOME OF THE SHRAPNEL FROM THE BATTLE OUTSIDE MUST'VE HIT THE SHIP.
THE TANK IS SELF-SEALING, BUT A LOT OF FUEL WAS LOST BEFORE THE LEAK SHUT OFF
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? THIS SHIP CAN'T FLY?
WELL--IN SPACE WE'D BE FINE, AND WE COULD PROBABLY MANAGE A SAFE RE-ENTRY.
BUT THERE'S NOT ENOUGH FUEL TO BOOST US INTO ORBIT.

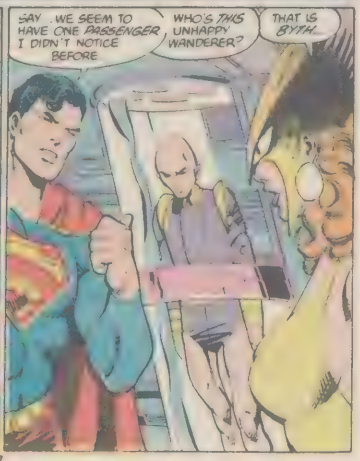
HA HA HA HA HA!
AND SO YOUR PITIFUL RESISTANCE CRUMBLES, KAITAR HOL!
THERE IS NO TIME FOR YOU TO ALERT OTHER EARTH CHAMPIONS. MY INVASION FLEET CAN SWEEP DOWN FROM SPACE...
... AND BLAST THIS PATHETIC PLANET BACK INTO THE STONE AGE!!
WELL -- I WOULDN'T OPEN AN "AX-AND-SPEAR-FRANCHISE" JUST YET, VED.
HAWKMAN... YOU'RE SURE THIS VESSEL CAN GET US TO THE FLEET, ONCE WE'RE SPACE-BORNE?
ABSOLUTELY POSITIVE, SUPERMAN
THEN DO WHATEVER YOU NEED TO, TO MAKE THIS BIRD SPACE-WORTHY...
... 'CAUSE YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A ONE-WAY TICKET INTO ORBIT...
... COURTESY OF THE SUPERMAN EXPRESS!!

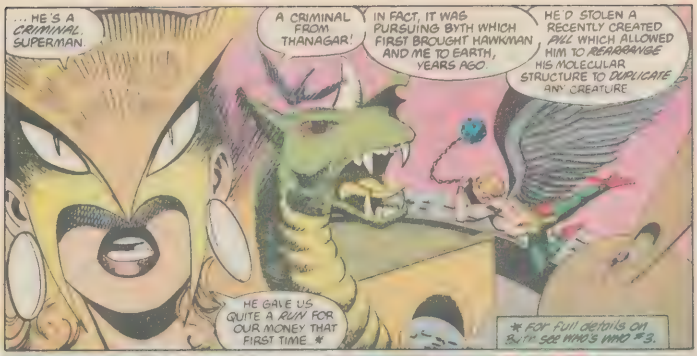

ALL INSTRUMENTS SHOW WE'RE CLEAR OF ATMOSPHERE
FIRING MAIN THRUSTERS...
NOW!
ENGINES FIRING...

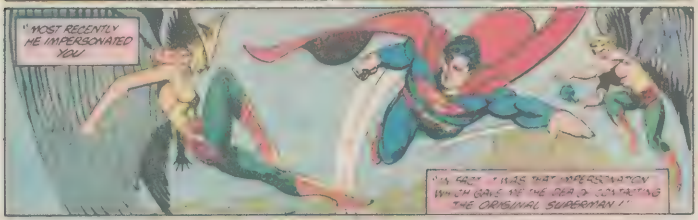

TIME FOR YOURS TRULY TO GET BACK ON BOARD
I'M FAST-- BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH TO KEEP UP WITH A STARSHIP!
NOT AT FULL THRUST, ANYWAY.

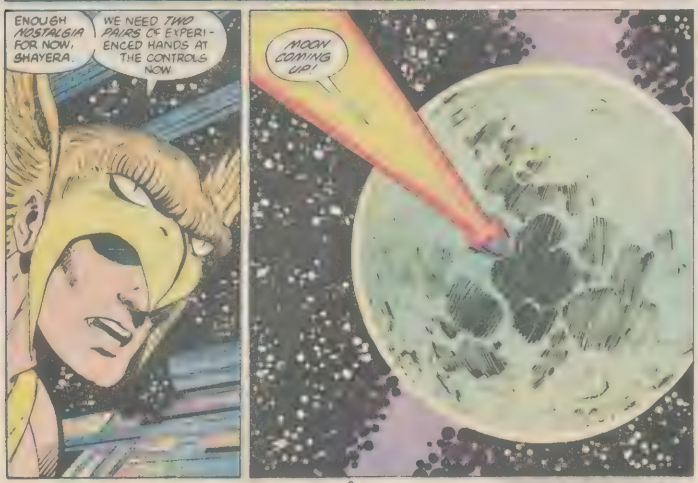
AIRLOCK CYCLING COMPLETE, KATAR
THE SHIP IS SECURE
EXCELLENT! WE SHOULD ACHIEVE LUNAR ORBIT IN TWELVE MINUTES!

LUNAR ORBIT? SO YOUR INVASION FLEET IS ON OR NEAR THE MOON?
THAT MAKES SENSE! IT'S THE PERFECT STAGING GROUND FOR--
411?


SAY, WE SEEM TO HAVE ONE PASSENGER I DIDN'T NOTICE BEFORE
WHO'S THIS UNHAPPY WANDERER?
THAT IS BYTH...


... HE'S A CRIMINAL, SUPERMAN.
A CRIMINAL FROM THANAGAR!
IN FACT, IT WAS PURSUING BYTH WHICH FIRST BROUGHT HAWKMAN AND ME TO EARTH, YEARS AGO.
HE'D STOLEN A RECENTLY CREATED PILL WHICH ALLOWED HIM TO REARRANGE HIS MOLECULAR STRUCTURE TO DUPLICATE ANY CREATURE
HE GAVE US QUITE A RUN FOR OUR MONEY THAT FIRST TIME *
* FOR FULL DETAILS ON BYTH SEE WHO'S WHO #3.


"MOST RECENTLY HE IMPERSONATED YOU
"IN FACT, IT WAS THAT IMPERSONATION WHICH GAVE ME THE IDEA OF CREATING THE ORIGINAL SUPERMAN!"


ENOUGH NOSTALGIA FOR NOW, SHAYERA.
WE NEED TWO PAIRS OF EXPERIENCED HANDS AT THE CONTROLS NOW.
MOON COMING UP!

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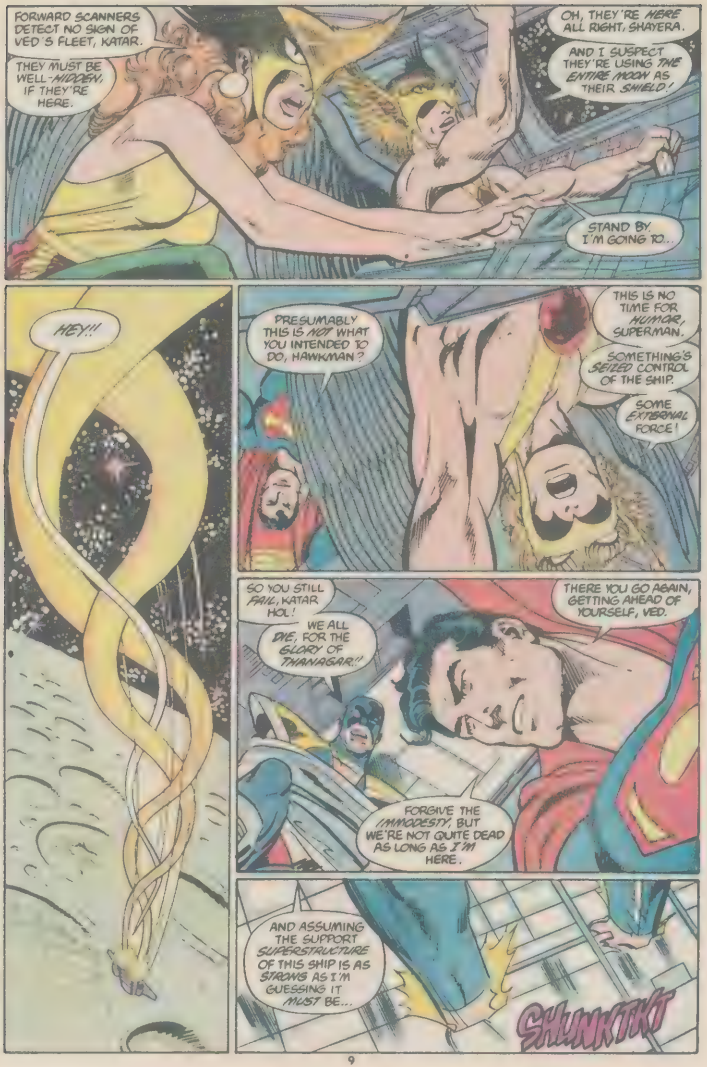
FREE GIFTS *from* DC COMICS!

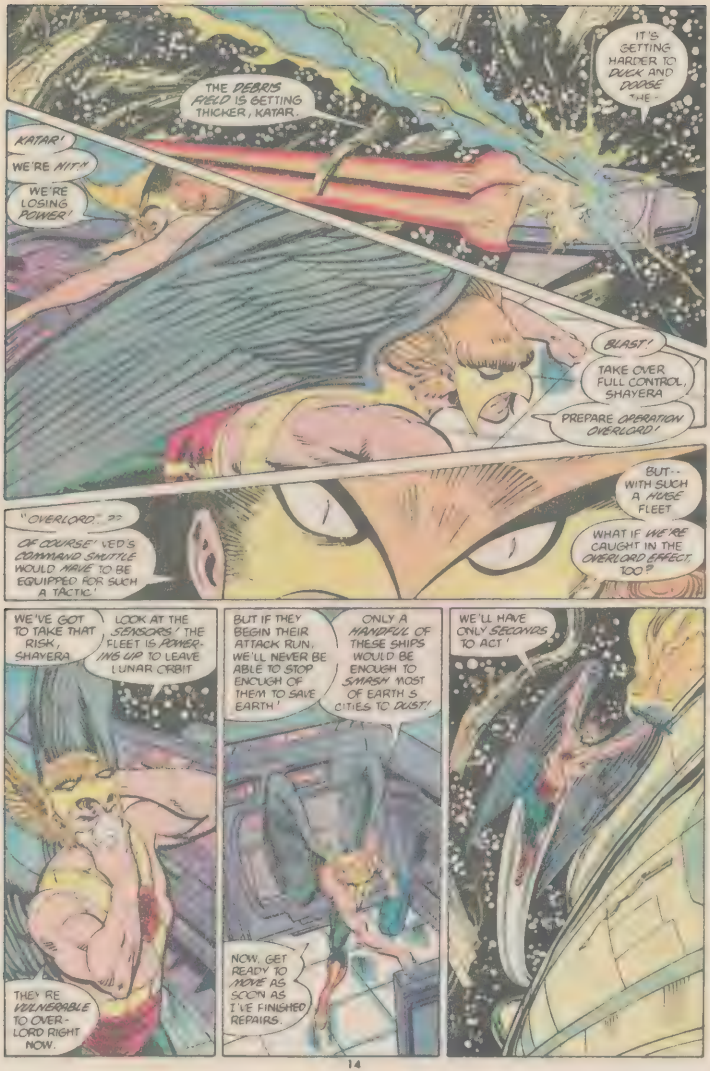

FORWARD SCANNERS DETECT NO SIGN OF VED'S FLEET, KATAR.
THEY MUST BE WELL-HIDDEN, IF THEY'RE HERE.
OH, THEY'RE HERE ALL RIGHT, SHAYERA.
AND I SUSPECT THEY'RE USING THE ENTIRE MOON AS THEIR SHIELD!
STAND BY. I'M GOING TO..
HEY!!
PRESUMABLY THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU INTENDED TO DO, HAWKMAN?
THIS IS NO TIME FOR HUMOR, SUPERMAN.
SOMETHING'S SEIZED CONTROL OF THE SHIP.
SOME EXTERNAL FORCE!
SO YOU STILL FAIL, KATAR HOL!
WE ALL DIE, FOR THE GLORY OF THANAGAR!!
THERE YOU GO AGAIN, GETTING AHEAD OF YOURSELF, VED.
FORGIVE THE UNMODESTY, BUT WE'RE NOT QUITE DEAD AS LONG AS I'M HERE.
AND ASSUMING THE SUPPORT SUPERSTRUCTURE OF THIS SHIP IS AS STRONG AS I'M GUESSING IT MUST BE...
SHUNK TIKT

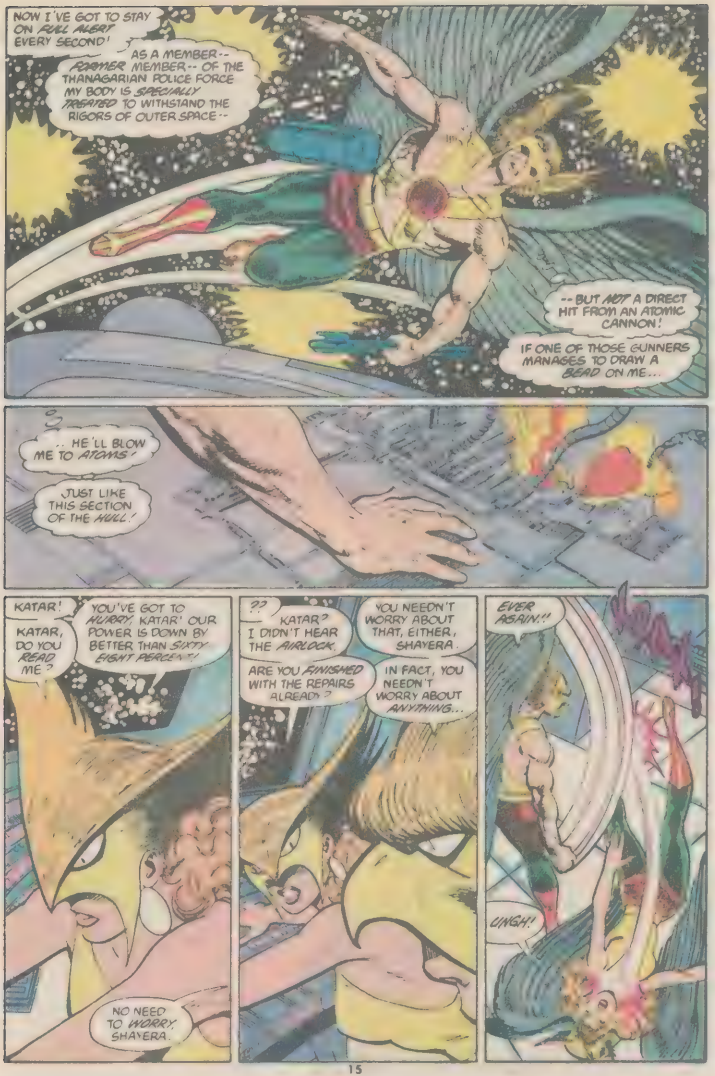
NO!
NO! IT CANNOT BE!
IT'S OBVIOUS, SHAYERA HE'S FLYING THE SHIP FROM INSIDE!
SUPERMAN--?!?
WHAT'RE YOU--?
OF COURSE IT CAN, VED!
THAT'S WHAT MAKES HIM--
--SUPERMAN!
SCOFF ALL YOU LIKE, TRAITORS.
BELOVED THANAGAR IS NOT TO BE DENIED!
LOOK!
LOOK AHEAD AND SEE THE FACE OF A TURN-COAT'S DEATH!!

THE THANAGARIAN FLEET!!!

THEY'RE FIRING ON US!!
DON'T THEY RECOGNIZE VED'S SHIP??
OF COURSE THEY DO, KATAR HOL! BUT THIS VESSEL DID NOT MAKE THE PROPER APPROACH!
THE FLEET COMMANDERS ARE UNDER STRICT ORDERS TO FIRE ON ANY SHIP WHICH FAILS TO FOLLOW ESTABLISHED PROTOCOL!
THEN IT'S TIME I LET YOU FLY THIS BABY AGAIN, HAWKMAN.
I'D BETTER GET OUT THERE AND RUN INTER-FERENCE!
WAIT, SUPERMAN! WE HAVE PORTABLE COOLEN UNITS.
LET ME GET ONE FOR YOU
NO TIME, HAWKWOMAN. LET ME JUST TAKE ONE GOOD, DEEP BREATH THAT SHOULD HOLD ME FOR AN HOUR OR SO.
LONG ENOUGH TO TEACH THESE MARAUDERS SOME INTERPLANETARY MANNERS!
KATAR... HE'S SMASHING THROUGH THEIR HYPER-ATOMIC CANNONS!
BUT... THE FLEET IS SO HUGE! NOT EVEN SUPERMAN CAN DISABLE ALL THE SHIPS!
NOT BY HIMSELF, ANYWAY.
ACTIVATE THE WEAPONS CONTROL CONSOLE, SHAYERA
WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THE MASSIVE FIREPOWER OF THOSE WARSHIPS.

BUT A SINGLE WASP CAN ANNOY A WHOLE HERD OF ELEPHANTS!
HAWKMAN AND HAWKWOMAN ARE RUNNING A PRETTY GOOD HARASSING MANEUVER!
--THEY'RE DISTRACTING THE GUNMEN ON THESE BIG TUBS--
--WHICH AFFORDS ME A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO DESTROY THEIR CANNONS!
BUT...
FOR ALL THE DAMAGE WE'RE INFLICTING, IT'S STILL JUST A DELAYING TACTIC.
THIS MAY BE AN INVASION FLEET, BUT IT'S STILL MANNED BY INTELLIGENT LIVING BEINGS.
I'D PREFER TO AVOID A WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.
THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY TO PREVENT THE INVASION!


IT'S GETTING HARDER TO DUCK AND DODGE THE-
THE DEBRIS FIELD IS GETTING THICKER, KATAR.
KATAR!
WE'RE HIT!
WE'RE LOSING POWER!
BLAST!
TAKE OVER FULL CONTROL, SHAYERA
PREPARE OPERATION OVERLORD!
BUT-- WITH SUCH A HUGE FLEET
WHAT IF WE'RE CAUGHT IN THE OVERLORD EFFECT, TOO?
"OVERLORD"??
OF COURSE! VED'S COMMAND SHUTTLE WOULD HAVE TO BE EQUIPPED FOR SUCH A TACTIC!
WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THAT RISK, SHAYERA
LOOK AT THE SENSORS! THE FLEET IS POWERING UP TO LEAVE LUNAR ORBIT
THEY'RE INVULNERABLE TO OVERLORD RIGHT NOW.
BUT IF THEY BEGIN THEIR ATTACK RUN, WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO STOP ENOUGH OF THEM TO SAVE EARTH!
ONLY A HANDFUL OF THESE SHIPS WOULD BE ENOUGH TO SMASH MOST OF EARTH'S CITIES TO DUST!
NOW, GET READY TO MOVE AS SOON AS I'VE FINISHED REPAIRS.
WE'LL HAVE ONLY SECONDS TO ACT!


NOW I'VE GOT TO STAY ON FULL ALERT EVERY SECOND!
AS A MEMBER -- FORMER MEMBER -- OF THE THANAGARIAN POLICE FORCE MY BODY IS SPECIALLY TREATED TO WITHSTAND THE RIGORS OF OUTER SPACE --
-- BUT NOT A DIRECT HIT FROM AN ATOMIC CANNON!
IF ONE OF THOSE GUNNERS MANAGES TO DRAW A BEAD ON ME...
.. HE'LL BLOW ME TO ATOMS!
JUST LIKE THIS SECTION OF THE HULL!
KATAR!
KATAR, DO YOU READ ME?
YOU'VE GOT TO HURRY, KATAR! OUR POWER IS DOWN BY BETTER THAN SIXTY EIGHT PERCENT!
NO NEED TO WORRY, SHAYERA.
??
KATAR? I DIDN'T HEAR THE AIRLOCK.
ARE YOU FINISHED WITH THE REPAIRS ALREADY?
YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, EITHER, SHAYERA.
IN FACT, YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING...
EVER AGAIN!!
UNGH!

K-KATAR... WHAT...??
SHUT UP!!
AS ALWAYS YOU TALK AND TALK AND TALK!
THE TALKING IS DONE, SHAYERA THAL!
AND SO IS YOUR LIFE!!
YOU'RE ::CHOKE:: YOU'RE NOT KATAR!
IF I HADN'T BEEN CONCENTRATING SO HARD ON FLYING THE SHIP I'D HAVE REALIZED AT ONCE!
YOU'RE..
...BUTH!!
UNSH!!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

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FOOL!
BYTH!
FOOL OF A FOOL!
I MANAGED TO RELEASE YOU FROM THE HOLDING TUBE SO YOU COULD DESTROY HAWKWOMAN!
INSTEAD, YOU FAIL ME!
AS ALL MY MINIONS FAIL ME!
THAT SOUNDS JUST LIKE YOU, VED NEVER WILLING TO ACCEPT THE BLAME FOR YOUR OWN INCOMPETENCE!
AGAIN YOU MOCK ME, SHAYERA THAL!
BUT FOR THE LAST..
TI-!!-IAHHHGH!!
MONG
AS USUAL IT'S THE VILLAIN'S OWN INABILITY TO RECOGNIZE HIS LIMITATIONS THAT DOES HIM IN!
BUT I'D BETTER SECURE FRIEND LED WITH SOMETHING STRONGER THAN THE FIREHOSE WE HAD HIM WRAPPED IN
THERE! THOSE GRAPPLES SHOULD HOLD HIM WHILE I PUT BYTH BACK TO BEDDIE-BYES.
NOW
KATAR!
COME IN, KATAR!
CAN YOU HEAR ME?

I'M HERE, HONEY.
REPAIRS ARE ALMOST COMPLETED. CHECK YOUR POWER LEVELS NOW.
EIGHTY-NINE PERCENT AND STILL RISING.
HOW MUCH LONGER WILL YOU BE OUT THERE?
THREE OR FOUR MINUTES. TRY TO SIGNAL SUPERMAN!
TELL HIM WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO
BUT... HE'S NOT WEARING A COM-LINK!
WHAT IF I CAN'T REACH HIM IN TIME??
JUST PRAY YOU CAN, SHAYERA
JUST PRAY YOU CAN!
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING!
MY SUPER-SENSES ARE DETECTING ALL KINDS OF FRANTIC ACTIVITY ON THE THANAGARIAN SHIPS
COULD IT BE SOMETHING THE MAWAGS ARE UP TO?

WAIT
THEY'RE FIRING AGAIN -- BUT NOT AT THE FLEET.
HOLD IT -- THERE'S A PATTERN TO THOSE BURSTS!
IT'S MORSE CODE!!
SHAYERA'S CALLING ME BACK TO THE SHIP...
AND PRONTO!!
SHAYERA -- HOW GOES OPERATION OVERLORD?
EVERYTHING IS ON SCHEDULE, KATAR.
THE SHIPS WERE UNABLE TO BLOCK MY OVERLORD SIGNAL, OF COURSE. AND WE'LL BE AT THE PRECISE GEOMETRIC CENTER OF THE FLEET IN LESS THAN A MINUTE!
BUT I'M STILL WORRIED, HONEY
OVERLORD IS USUALLY AN AUTOMATIC FUNCTION. IF WE SHOULD MISS TARGET.
OR IF SUPERMAN SHOULD FAIL TO GET BACK ON BOARD BEFORE OVERLORD FIRES--
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, SHAYERA
SO FAR EVERYTHING IS GOING EXACTLY AS PLANNED!
OH NO!!
THE AUXILIARY BOOSTERS ARE FIRING BY THEMSELVES!
IT'S THAT OUTSIDE SIGNAL AGAIN!
WE'RE ACCELERATING!!
WHAT THE...?!?
VED'S SHIP IS PULLING AWAY AT MAXIMUM THRUST!
HOW DO HAWKMAN AND HAWKWOMAN EXPECT ME TO CATCH UP?

KATAR--WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
I CAN'T FIND A WAY TO BLOCK THAT SIGNAL. IT'S TAKEN OVER ALL OUR PRIMARY CONTROL FUNCTIONS!
THERE'S NO WAY TO CUT THE AUXILIARY THRUSTERS.
BUT IF THE OVERLORD SEQUENCE FIRES WHEN WE'RE PAST GEO-CENTER...
...WE'LL BE TOO FAR FROM THE FLEET FOR IT TO BE EFFECTIVE!
EARTH WILL BE LOST!"
THERE'S ONLY ONE CHANCE, SHAYERA!
WE'LL HAVE TO TRIGGER OVERLORD MANUALLY!!
BUT...
DO WE DARE RISK THAT? WE DON'T HAVE THE PRECISE CONTROL OF THE AUTO-CONTROL...
WE COULD BE CAUGHT IN THE OVERLORD EFFECT OURSELVES!
WE'VE BEEN PREPARED TO DIE FOR EARTH'S SAKE FOR SOME TIME NOW, SHAYERA.
AT LEAST THIS WAY WE'LL HAVE A CHANCE FOR LIFE!
YES.
BUT A BILLION LIGHT-YEARS FROM ANYWHERE!
THAT'S WHERE OVERLORD WILL THROW THE SHIPS OF THIS FLEET.
CLEAR ACROSS THE UNIVERSE FROM WHERE THEY ARE NOW!
AND... KATAR. WHAT ABOUT SUPERMAN?
HE'S STILL OUTSIDE!
THE OVERLORD EFFECT IS A FORCED FIRING OF A SHIP'S HYPER-DRIVE ENGINES.
SUPERMAN IS A HUMAN BEING. HE HAS NO DRIVE ENGINES. HE WON'T BE AFFECTED.
AT LEAST--THAT'S THE THEORY.
DAMN! THERE'S JUST NO MORE TIME TO WASTE THINKING ABOUT IT!

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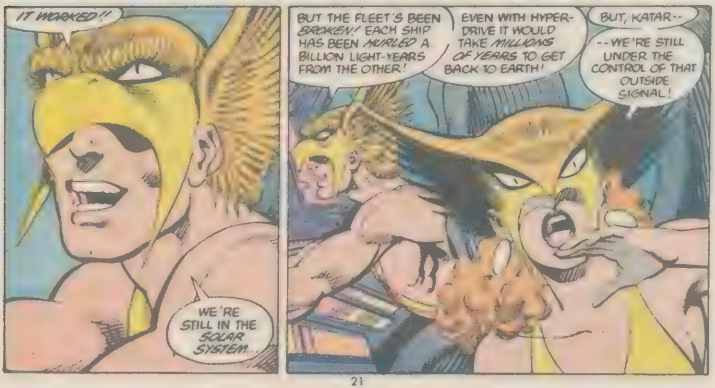
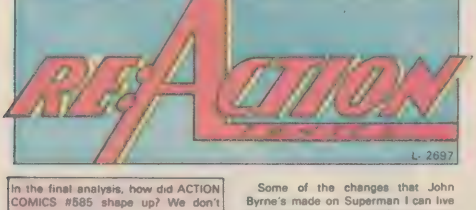

IT WORKED!!
WE'RE STILL IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM...
BUT THE FLEET'S BEEN BROKEN! EACH SHIP HAS BEEN HURLED A BILLION LIGHT-YEARS FROM THE OTHER!
EVEN WITH HYPER-DRIVE IT WOULD TAKE MILLIONS OF YEARS TO GET BACK TO EARTH!
BUT, KATAR--
--WE'RE STILL UNDER THE CONTROL OF THAT OUTSIDE SIGNAL!

WE'RE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE SUN!
AND THERE'S NO SIGN OF SUPERMAN ANYWHERE!!
TO BE CONTINUED... in the pages of HAWKMAN #11 and ACTION #589!



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In the final analysis, how did ACTION COMICS #585 shape up? We don't know—you tell us...

Dear DC

"And Graves Give Up Their Dead..." in ACTION #585 worked well because of some tight plotting and the usual super pencil and ink job. It's always a pleasure to see the Phantom Stranger teamed with Superman. I think they work well together because they're complete opposites—they offer an interesting counterbalance to each other.

The short prelude between Superman and Arathaza, as told by the Phantom Stranger, was intriguing. (Was this Arathaza's first appearance?) "ACTION" certainly does seem to be the key word for this book, and I fully approve. The new Superman is far more interesting now that he can be hurt, and is often forced to struggle in order to achieve his goals. I hope to see more examples of this in the coming months.

The Phantom Stranger's trip to the Kingdom of the Damned was a fitting Halloween treat. Too often seasonal material falls flat because of silly and contrived scriptwriting, but ACTION #585 surpassed the norm and managed to entertain me.

The only complaint I can offer concerns the crowded covers. Do yourselves a favor and dump the introductory "Superman and..." and give us a "clean" logo again. Just ACTION COMICS will do fine, thank you.

Thomas McNulty
154 Golfview Lane, Apt. C
Carpentersville, IL 60110

This was indeed Arathaza's first appearance, Tom.

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

ACTION #585 was a great improvement over its predecessor. The Phantom Stranger's comments about Barbara Kowaleski were interesting. I can't say that I know any truly evil people, but I certainly do know some people that are petty, spiteful and mean. Trust me, those traits aren't anything to sneeze at. The scene where the Stranger shows the victims, both directly and indirectly affected by the Evil Dead, reminded me of the theme of Frank Capra's film "It's A Wonderful Life." That classic movie showed that one man's life can touch and shape the lives of so many others. In this case, it's the evil deed that can have more than one immediate victim.

Some of the changes that John Byrne's made on Superman I can live with, others are going to take some getting used to. For instance, I didn't see anything particularly wrong with Superman's costume being made from Kryptonian material. I figure that if the man, in Earth's environment, would become indestructible, then anything else from Krypton on Earth would be indestructible. This would certainly keep his cape—which really makes Superman look dynamic when it whips in the wind—in one piece.

One last thought. Since Clark Kent is keeping exercise equipment in his apartment to explain his physique, it brings up a question that has stuck in my mind for years: Does Superman have to exercise to maintain his build? I know that even if he were built like Dom DeLuise, he would still be superstrong, but, if he didn't exercise, would he end up *looking* like Dom DeLuise?

Willie Holmes
8453 S. Saginaw Ave
Chicago, IL 60617

It's our understanding, Willie, that Dom DeLuise's done just fine with his looks. As you know some people are naturally heavier than others—some are not. It's our assumption that Superman would be a "not." (But, y'know, that whole segment of your letter just serves to make us glad that John Byrne's the one we put in charge of Superman's revitalization—and not Willie Holmes!)

* * * * *

Dear DC:

Just once, for the sheer novelty of the situation, I'd like to see a story involving a cemetery that did *not* include the artist putting his wife's, editor's, girlfriend's, dog's or his own name on a tombstone anywhere in the story.

Other than that, ACTION #585 was rather interesting.

I see that John Byrne is of the "shadow-over-the-face" school of Phantom Stranger artist, as opposed to the Jim Aparo "he's-wearing-a-mask-but-you-can't-see-his-eyeballs" style. I always thought that a shadow falling from PS's brow to the bridge of his nose was the best look for the Stranger.

The story in this issue was also very interesting. No matter what happens in the DC Universe, the Stranger is a constant. He may show up at JLA headquarters, Clark Kent's apartment, the Batcave, or even riding the Haunted Tank, and none of it seems contrived. The very nature of the character allows him to get involved *and* involve the others in situations apart from the normal workings of standard continuity.

The future lineup of ACTION COMICS also looks great.

T.E. Pouncey
Wichita, KS 67208

* * * * *

Dear DC

Ahh, yes, this is more like it! While I wasn't too thrilled with the last issue, ACTION #585 was excellent. To say that the Phantom Stranger is one of my favorite characters would be a gross understatement, so I can enthusiastically tell you how happy I am to finally see John Byrne bring his artistic talents to this character. "And Graves Give Up Their Dead..." was the kind of story that delivers both entertainment *and* message, something that isn't seen very often these days. Superman's battle with the creature took a backseat to the Phantom Stranger's trial of the dead in this issue. I especially liked the way PS brought up the spirits of the wronged innocents to combat the evil dead, it was definitely a welcome change from the charge-in-and-kill method of fighting normally presented in these situations. I also loved the ending! The Phantom Stranger must always be played mysteriously, or I think he will lose his appeal. Even after SECRET ORIGINS #10 gave us four possible origins, the Phantom Stranger still remains as much a mystery as ever. Thank you for a very enjoyable issue, and I hope that all the rest are this good.

Kevin Hall
P.O. Box 708
Catlewood, VA 24224

Thanks for all your favorable comments, Kevin, and we had hoped that all the rest of the mail would've been this good as well—but unfortunately...

* * * * *

Dear Editor

I've been talking about the new Superman to quite a lot of people, and I think I get the most pleasure from these books at night, when I read a page or two with my loved ones before we go to sleep. Now, here are some comments about ACTION #585.

1. The Phantom Stranger tells Superman at the end of the story, "There are some things Man was not meant to know." Superman is not an ordinary man, nor is he of the race of Man. I think

he could probably withstand the shock of this knowledge.

2. Generally, I think Superman talks too much. His word balloons get in the way of the pictures. It was appropriate in the earlier books where there was a lot to explain, but less so now. Another problem with so much talking is that, because we read all the balloons aloud, we never get to sleep on time!

3. Superman meets the New Gods in ACTION #586, #486! Yee, gods! And only five lines after the word "typos"!

Aaron Gibbons
P.O. Box 1760
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

Thanks for writing, Aaron, and we'll work on some of those problems you've outlined. Now, it's getting a little late so—GIBBONS FAMILY OF NEW YORK CITY, GO TO SLEEP ALREADY!!!

Dear Editor:

The swirling soil giant in ACTION #585 seems like a very down-to-earth character.

Generally, I'm not too crazy about the dead returning to life, or the comic book equivalent thereof. I've got this wacky notion that once you're dead that's it! But I guess you *had* to tailor the foe to the teaming of Superman and the Phantom Stranger: physical might against Superman, and supernatural evil against the Stranger. Joining them both against Metropolis' tax evaders might lack a certain drama, I admit.

I liked Superman's pro-life sentiments and his initial hesitancy in destroying a living, thinking creature. That's certainly a refreshing change from today's comics norm of the more killings the better.

One point I didn't care for, however, was Superman's hefting what amounts to a mountain of dirt into space. I thought he wasn't supposed to be *that* powerful anymore. (Just because he strained and said, "Ggnnn-ahhgh" doesn't make it okay.) Besides, even assuming he was that strong, wouldn't it be difficult to keep the loose soil particles together all in one convenient lump?

Still, it might be funny to see the whole filthy mound of muck land all over Metropolis next issue!

Joe Frank
4425 N. 78th St., #2608
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Superman's redefined powers have been explained as able to "keep loose soil particles together all in one convenient lump," Joe. (See SUPERMAN #1 for the full scoop.)

And as far as it being "funny" to see that "filthy mound of muck" hit Metropolis next issue—well, it might *be, so that isn't what's happening! But you will find out exactly what happens with that "F.M.O.M." right here in ACTION #589—and take our word for it, Superman won't think it's very funny when he faces that particular crisis next month!*

Dear DC:

First the Phantom Stranger is given a major role in the LEGENDS mini-series, then he has a *whole issue* of SECRET ORIGINS (#10) devoted to him, and now he's paired with Superman in ACTION COMICS #585! Is DC Comics testing the waters to see if today's comic readers would be interested in seeing the Phantom Stranger in his own mini-series or monthly title? I, for one, hope they are!

I have liked the Phantom Stranger since he appeared in SHOWCASE #80 and was very disappointed when his series was cancelled way back in the mid-seventies. After the sixties' SPECTRE series and the original Deadman series in STRANGE ADVENTURES, the Phantom Stranger was the best supernatural/mystery series that has appeared in comics in the past 25 years. During the years when the PHANTOM STRANGER was on the stands most comics stories dealt with (and still do for the most part) the basic concept of good versus evil, but the Stranger's adventures explored this idea on a cosmic scale while also focusing on how the outcome of such adventures affected the lives of ordinary people. The examination of human suffering, the struggles of ordinary people against insurmountable odds, the explorations of human frailties and strengths were all prominent features of the PHANTOM STRANGER series. While his title wasn't everybody's cup of tea, there was an eloquence about the character that has remained with him since his title was cancelled. Not everybody bought his comic but the very thought of tampering with the character would be almost sinful to anyone who has known him!

The Phantom Stranger that appeared alongside Superman in ACTION COMICS #585 was for the most part the same Stranger. True, the mystical qualities of the Phantom Stranger weren't as dominant as they were when he had his own title, but I feel that that was mostly due to the necessity for having the physical qualities of Superman be more dominant, not to poor handling of the Stranger. Besides, the Phantom Stranger never did come on like gangbusters in the area of characterization. He was always more subtle, guiding rather than taking charge, a part of the background rather than standing center stage, a man of words rather than a man of might. Much of what the Phantom Stranger does he does *off* stage with only the consequences of his actions catching one's attention. In this area the Stranger was captured perfectly. While Superman probably got most of the credit for saving the day it was the Phantom Stranger who did most of the work. But that doesn't matter to the Stranger himself, he cares nothing for hearing the cheers of adoring crowds, only of helping others and seeing that the balance is kept.

I hope that comics readers in the eighties do take a liking to the Phantom Stranger. In today's comic market, where readers demand more "meat" in their stories, the Stranger would be a natural. "And Graves Give Up Their Dead..." was a fine example of what the Phantom Stranger is capable of. It would be a shame if this fine character isn't given a chance to show today's readers what he can do on his own!

I'm sure you'll be getting a lot of suggestions from people who are following this series as to who they would like to see teamed-up with Superman ... so I might as well give you mine. But instead of mentioning the obvious faves that I'm sure everybody else has thought of I'm suggesting some that might not have crossed your mind. Here they are:

Atomic Knight (it would be interesting to see how his armor fares against a literal Man of Steel), Black Orchid, Jonni Thunder, The Secret Six (perhaps finally answering the question as to who Mockingbird really is; my money is on Doctor August Durant), Ultra the Multi-Alien, the modern Newsboy Legion (with the Jim Harper clone), the Golden Guardian and the Sea Devils.

Well, that's my list of who I'd like to see in ACTION COMICS, and whether or not they appear, I plan to keep my eye on this title because I have a feeling that there are going to be some fascinating things going on in ACTION COMICS in months to come.

Jonathan Gilbert
271 Southcrest Drive
London, Ontario N6J 1N3
Canada

That is kind of an eclectic list, Jon, exactly how long have you been with DC? (Sounds to us like you've been a faithful reader longer than Siegel and Shuster have been with us!)

We're glad to hear you like the Phantom Stranger, as well. We liked him too and we have indeed been "testing the waters," so to speak. It's a little early yet for any formal announcements, but, suffice it to say, keep your eyes peeled in 1987 for the PHANTOM STRANGER mini-series!! This series is going to deal directly with some of the very aspects of the Stranger's old series that you mentioned liking so much back in paragraph two of your letter, Jon—while also giving the Stranger some extra-heavy stuff to deal with on his own personal front! The PHANTOM STRANGER mini is also being drawn by two artists who've both had extensive comic book careers but have not yet had the chance to work with DC on any projects—until now! (More on this spectacular 1987 mini-series as time draws nearer to publication—it'll be worth the wait!!!)

NEXT ISSUE: Wondering what happened to Superman at the end of this issue? Well, they tell us that the Green Lantern Corps joins him in deep space next month ... but, quite frankly, it doesn't look to us like there was much hope for the Man of Steel—but maybe, just maybe the GLs can do something! As hinted at earlier in this letters page, the story will have something to do with ACTION #585—so be here if you believe in Supermen!! That's ACTION #589 by John Byrne and Dick Giordano—in thirty big ones!

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ECHO BEAR Sell 20 Items
G.E. AM/FM LED DIGITAL CLOCK RADIO Sell 18 Items
RADIO CONTROL SPINNING SAM Sell 13 Items
MILTON BRADLEY ROBOTIX Sell 12 Items
TASCO MICROSCOPE LAB Sell 17 Items
REMOTE CONTROL REMO-BOT Sell 9 Items
PANASONIC MODULAR AUDIO SYSTEM Sell 90 Items
BMX "FREEWHEEL" BICYCLE Sell 80 Items
ACADEMY NYLON BACKPACK TENT Sell 18 Items
AEROBIE FLYING MACHINE Sell 8 Items
NERF GOLF Sell 17 Items
G.E. FM HEADSET RADIO Sell 21 Items
SOUND ACTIVATED CHIGGLES Sell 15 Items
ACADEMY 3-PERSON DOME TENT Sell 34 Items
THE RAG BAG Sell 17 Items
G.E. WALKIE-TALKIE SET WITH MORSE CODE Sell 17 Items
ARMITRON CALCULATOR ALARM WATCH Sell 10 Items
TASCO TELESCOPE Sell 26 Items
WEBCOR ZIP TELEPHONE Sell 13 Items
THE WILD WATCH Sell 9 Items
BIG GENERATOR LIGHT SET Sell 10 Items
ESTES ELECTRIC LAUNCH ROCKET KIT Sell 18 Items
SPORTUS STUDY CENTER Sell 26 Items
MAGNAVOX PORTABLE TV Sell 56 Items
WHEEL OF FORTUNE GAME Sell 14 Items
BLACKSTONE MAGIC SHOW SET Sell 12 Items
STEMMLER GLASS BOW ARCHERY SET Sell 15 Items
CALLIGRAPHY MARKER SET Sell 9 Items
BONTEMPI ELECTRIC ORGAN Sell 27 Items
SPALDING "LARRY BIRD" BASKETBALL Sell 15 Items
"JUMPIN' JIMINY" TRAMPOLINE Sell 15 Items
MAC GREGOR BASEBALL GLOVE Sell 13 Items
"MUTTSY" Sell 9 Items
THE LOWABLE HOUND Sell 14 Items
3 SOUNDS BIKE SIREN WITH MICROPHONE Sell 9 Items
MISC SOLAR-POWERED POCKET CALCULATOR Sell 5 Items
DELUXE UNO CARD GAME Sell 8 Items
THE ANIMAL 4x4 MODEL Sell 10 Items
ZIPPER CARRY-ALL BAG Sell 5 Items
SPALDING "FOOTLOOSE" SOCCER BALL Sell 11 Items
SENIOR CHEMISTRY LAB Sell 19 Items
ACADEMY DAY PACK Sell 8 Items
KODAK "STYLELITE" POCKET CAMERA OUTFIT Sell 20 Items
SLINKY WATCH Sell 17 Items
G.E. STEREO AM/FM CASSETTE HEADSET PLAYER Sell 26 Items
RAINBOW LATCH HOOK SET Sell 9 Items
ELECTRONIC GRID WATCH Sell 15 Items
CLUE VCR GAME Sell 35 Items
ELECTRONIC TREASURE SAFE CHEST Sell 11 Items

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PHONE FREE

CALL CAPTAIN "O" OPERATOR TOLL FREE
1-800-528-6644*
(In Arizona: 1-800-352-0458)
24 HOURS A DAY . . .
7 DAYS A WEEK, including Sunday

Ask for Deb

She or another CAPTAIN "O" operator is waiting to rush your name, address and ZIP CODE to us.

* Service available in 48 United States and Puerto Rico. Alaska and Hawaii please reply by mail.

* PLEASE . . . operators can take name and address only . . . CANNOT answer questions.

BETCHA BITE A CHIP with Chips Ahoy!

THERE ARE SO MANY CHOCOLATE CHIPS IN A CHIPS AHOY! COOKIE, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO BITE A COOKIE WITHOUT BITING A CHIP. SEE IF YOU CAN "EAT" YOUR WAY THROUGH THIS MAZE, "BITING" INTO AS FEW CHIPS AS POSSIBLE.

BETCHA BITE A CHIP SCALE

5 OR MORE - YOU BIT A MOUTHFUL (TRY AGAIN)
4 CHIPS — CHOCOLATE MUNCHER
3 CHIPS — NOT A BAD BIT O' BITING, BUDDY
2 CHIPS — CHOOSY CHEWER
1 CHIP — CHIP SKIPPER
0 CHIPS — IMPOSSIBLE! (WE TOLD YOU)

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Bonkers!®

CHEWY CANDY

PRESENTS

The Misadventures of Captain Clueless In Pursuit of SCARY, BOUNCING Ugly Balls™

I'LL FIND THEM ON COW'S TAILS OR INSIDE THE FRUIT OF DESERT CACTI OR IN WHIRLPOOLS IN THE HEART OF THE GANGLION RAIN FOREST...
Little does Capt. Clueless know Ugly Balls are FREE! from Bonkers! CHEWY CANDY
Meanwhile back in another realm, Ugly Balls await your orders.

Dare to order Bonkers! scary bouncing Ugly Balls...

FREE!

...when you send in 10 Bonkers! outside labels.

DC

Please send me a FREE Bonkers! Ugly Ball, only available from Bonkers! chewy candy. Here's the UPC symbol from 10 Bonkers! outside labels. That's the part with the lines and the numbers that looks like this: 0 VOID 190220

Sorry U.S. orders only. Allow up to 8 weeks for delivery. Offer expires December 31, 1987 or until supply lasts. Void where prohibited.

Send to:
BONKERS! UGLY BALL
P.O. Box 1204
Grand Rapids, MN 55745

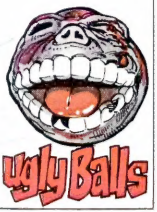
Be sure to include the following information:

Your name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

Age_____



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